

## Question #1: What are the sociodemographic characteristics of the population?

The HIV epidemic in the United States, and in South Carolina, is a composite of multiple, unevenly distributed epidemics in different regions and among different populations. These populations may comprise persons who practice similar high-risk behavior, such as injecting drugs or having unprotected sex with an infected person. Although race and ethnicity are not risk factors for HIV transmission, they are markers for complex underlying social, economic, and cultural factors that affect personal behavior and health. Low socioeconomic status is associated with increased disease morbidity and premature mortality. Unemployment status is correlated to limited access to health care services, resulting in increased risk for disease. This section provides background information on South Carolina's populations and contextual information, i.e. education, poverty level, housing, etc, for assessing potential HIV impact. The social, economic, and cultural context of HIV infection must be considered when funding, designing, implementing and evaluating HIV prevention programs for diverse populations.

### The State

South Carolina lies on the southeastern seaboard of the United States. Shaped like an inverted triangle, the state is bounded on the north by North Carolina, on the southeast by the Atlantic Ocean, and on the southwest by Georgia. It ranks 40th among the 50 states in size and has a geographic area of 30,111 square miles. South Carolina has a diverse geography that stretches from the Blue Ridge Mountains in the northwest corner to the beaches along the Atlantic coast in the southeast. There are 46 counties and they are divided into 12 public health districts. Columbia, located in the center of the state, is the capital and the largest city. There are 3 metropolitan areas with a population of 500,000 or more: Columbia, Charleston and Greenville areas. The state is crisscrossed by interstate highways that link it with every part of the country, including I-95 extending north-south across the center of the state from New York to Florida and I-26 from Asheville, North Carolina to Charleston, South Carolina, and I-20 that extends east-west across the state from Florence, South Carolina to Atlanta, Georgia. Manufacturing is the state's leading industry, followed by tourism and forestry.

### Populations

Based on projected population estimates, in 2002, the total number of South Carolinians was 3,971,899. Of this total, 68% were Caucasian, 29.9% were African American, 0.8% was Native American, 1.2% was Asian and Pacific Islander, and 2.6% were of Hispanic origin. Fifty-two percent were female and forty-eight percent were male. Seventy-two percent of the population distribution in South Carolina is defined as metropolitan, 29% is non-metropolitan. The proportion of persons who have completed a bachelor's degree or more is 20.4, lower than the U.S. proportion of 24.4. (Figure 2)

**Figure 2: Selected Demographic Information  
South Carolina and United States, 2000**

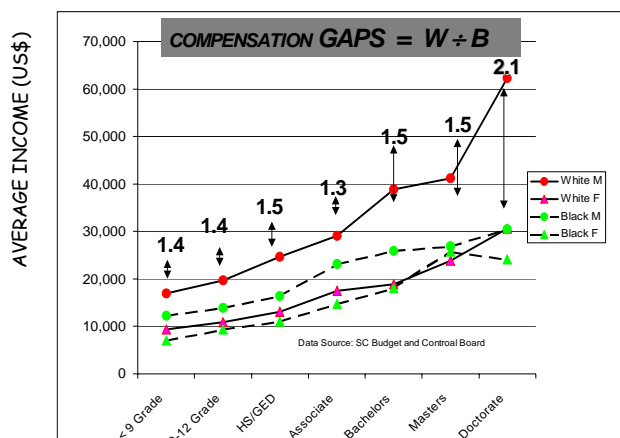
Population (2000)	South Carolina 4,012,012	United States 281,421,906
Pop. Density (persons/square mi.)	133.2	79.6
Median Age	35.4	35.3
Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Pop.		
% White	67.2	75.1
% Black	29.5	12.3
% Asian/Pacific Islander	0.9	3.6
% Amer.Ind./Alaskan Nat.	0.3	0.9
% Hispanic	2.4	12.5
Educational Attainment (Age ≥25yrs )		
High school grad. +	76.3	80.4
Bachelor's degree +	20.4	24.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

## Education & Earnings

Despite the economic strides it has made in recent years, South Carolina remains among the states with the highest percentage of persons who live below the poverty level (15th of fifty states and District of Columbia). Educational attainment is strongly correlated with poverty, and South Carolina continues to rank low in percent of persons over 25 years of age who have bachelors' degrees or higher (36th of fifty states and District of Columbia). Nearly twenty percent (19.2%) of the population has less than a high school education.

**Figure 3: Income by Educational Attainment by Race & Gender: SC, 1990**



Educational attainment and earnings are directly related. The more education a South Carolinian has, the more money he/she is likely to earn. However, if we compare across gender and racial lines, there are inconsistencies.

White males clearly attain the highest incomes. The income gap between whites and blacks is higher for each education level, but particularly increases for persons with bachelors degrees or more. Income for whites is 1.5 times greater than blacks for persons with bachelors and masters degrees, and is 2.1 times greater than blacks for persons with doctorates. (Figure 3)

**Figure 4: SC Per Capita Income in 1999 by Race and Hispanic Origin**

	<b>INCOME GAPS</b>	<b>Rel to Blacks</b>
• For Whites	\$22,095	1.9
• Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	\$21,638	1.8
• For Asian	\$20,541	1.7
• For American Indian/ Alaskan Native	\$15,325	1.3
• Of Hispanic Origin	\$12,143	1.0
• For Other Races	\$10,473	0.9
• For Blacks	\$11,776	1.0
• OVERALL	\$18,795	1.6

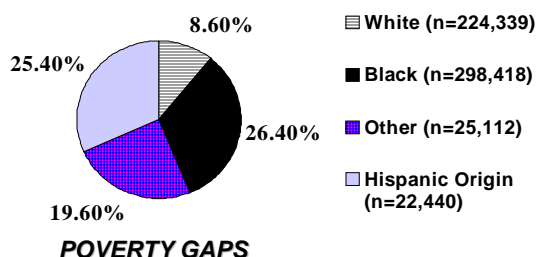
Data Source: SC-Budget & Control Board, Office of Research & Statistics

In comparison, Blacks, people of Hispanic origin, and other races earned the least per capita income, averaging 39% below the state's average. Whites earned 18% above the state's average per capita income. (Figure 4)

## Poverty Level

Based on 2000 Census data, approximately 13.4% of South Carolinians lived below the poverty level (ranking 17th in the US); and 10.7 % of South Carolinian families lived below the poverty level (ranking 12th in the US).

**Figure 5: Percent of Each Racial/Ethnic Pop Living Below Federal Poverty Level; SC, 1999**



Data Source: SC-Budget & Control Board, Office of Research & Statistics

Twenty-six percent of Black South Carolinians were below poverty in 1999, compared to 25% of persons of Hispanic descent, almost 9% among Whites and close to 20% of persons categorized as other, which includes Asian, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans. (Figure 5)

### Insurance/Access to Primary Care

Thirteen percent (13%) of South Carolinians do not have health insurance coverage. A significantly higher proportion of persons in the state do not have access to a primary care provider (35.8%) compared to the total U.S. population (17.1%). (Figure 6) Over 95% of counties are designated all or part medically underserved areas and all or part health profession shortage areas (1999).

**Figure 6: Selected Access Indicators, SC and US**

	SC	US
Total Pop. Uninsured, 2002-2003	13.4%	15.4%
Below 200% Poverty Level, 2003	33.7%	31.1%
Counties Designated All/Part Medically Underserved Areas, 1999	95.7%	80.5%
Without Access to Primary Care Provider, 1996	35.8%	17.1%
Women Receiving 1 <sup>st</sup> Trimester Prenatal Care, 2000	79%	83%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, HRSA

### Employment

South Carolina's unemployment rate as of December 2003 was 6.5%, slightly higher than the US rate of 5.7%. The median income in 2002 was \$38,074 vs. the US median income of \$42,654.

### Housing

According to the US Census 2001 Supplemental Survey, 71% of the state's homes are owned. The SC Dept. of Commerce estimates that 12,410 persons may be homeless at some point in time.

### Summary

South Carolina, as many southern states, ranks high for poverty, low educational attainment, and uninsured population compared to other US states. These factors can affect one's ability to access prevention and health care services and adhere to regimens for treatment and care of diseases that may lead to more severe consequences.